

ARE THERE TWO WAYS TO BE SAVED?

Ephesians 2:8-9

Introduction: From what we see and hear concerning heaven and how to get there, being saved and how to get/be saved, there must be more than one way for there are so many churches of different faiths, so many doctrines about the same thing but entirely different from each other. So according to some, God is not the only one to know how to be saved and get us to heaven. If this is so, then what other ways are there?

I. SOME WAYS PEOPLE TRY TO SAVE THEMSELVES

Looking at the possibility that people can save themselves, history shows that this idea has been the practice of humanity ever since the beginning.

1. Self-Affliction

- Tormenting one's body is the hope that torture of one's flesh delivers the soul.
- The Hindus hold their hands up toward the skies (heaven) till their arms lock.
 - They lie on beds of nails
 - They starve themselves
 - They make long pilgrimages on their knees.
- Thus a twisted concept of attaining salvation and reaching "heaven."
- Martin Luther whipped himself until totally covered in blood.
- Origin (one of the Church fathers) emasculated himself.
- Grieving, tormenting, afflicting the body in order to be "delivered" is still being done.

2. Human Sacrifice.

- A distorted practice of God's supreme sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.
- Aztecs of Mexico sacrificed people by taking the beating heart out of the sacrifice and offering it to the gods.
- In India children are flung to crocodiles in the Ganges river.
- In the Old Testament Ahaz offered his son to the god Moloch by throwing him into a heated brass image's arms. Children were regularly burned to death that way as an offering.
- Josiah made the valley of Hinnam a place of the dead where garbage, dead animals, dead poor, and the filth of the city were dumped. In the New Testament the place was called Gehenna.
- In Africa blood is put on sticks, trees, stones, all sorts of places, believing spirits live in them, thus offering blood sacrifices.
- Rivers of blood has flown through the centuries from people trying to appease their gods and to attain their "heaven."

3. Good Works.

- "If I am good, I will go to heaven..." seems to be the belief of many. There is a ladder with its rungs made of good, better and best, so by giving up this or that, one may advance higher until eventually making it to heaven.

- God says our righteousness is as filthy rags, but people don't think so and that they will be good enough eventually.
- Keep the golden rule, say some but that is a shallow understanding of the depth of sin and depravity.
- Sin is in every pore of man and nothing we can ever do will be perfect. There is always the element of mistake, shortcoming and error.
- Jesus Christ says that no man will ever be good enough.

4. By Religious Ritual.

- Satan is the most religious creature of God's creation and he desires it and provokes it.
 - Jesus was tempted by Satan to worship him instead of God.
- Satan perverts people's minds with lies and ritualistic hoaxes.
 - Get baptized and you will be cleansed and that will be all you need.
- Trust in the Lord's Supper (sacraments) and you will get to heaven alright.
- Satan blinds people's eyes to true, saving worship.

II. THE WAY GOD SAVES

1. Saves by Grace.

- Grace refers to that indescribable something that causes one to love, to be attracted to someone.
- Bursts of generosity, lavish gifts to the unmerited, without any thoughts of return.
- Christians exalted the Word, dedicated it to the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.
 - Charisma is a gift of God's grace thus a "charismatic" gift.
- Charis, a gift, a forgiveness of a debt, coming to mean mercy of God in forgiving and saving us.
- All were perishing but God in His goodness and mercy lifted and saved us. God did it.
- Because God is gracious, sinners are welcome. Because God abounds in infinite love, He forgives. Because God's mercy endures forever, we are not destroyed. Because God is all compassionate, we are saved. GRACE IS GOD.

2. Saved Through Faith.

- Our lives are lived by having "faith" in this or that, in this person or that person. Our entire life is woven throughout with faith. There are three parts to saving faith:
 - We must hear. Hearing the word of God. Saving faith comes by hearing the Word of God.
 - We must accept God's Word as True. What the Bible says, the Christian testimony.
 - We accept all sorts of other things from all over the world. We accept the word of others we have never met as being true.
 - Our hearts are like our hands, made to receive. Truth, God's and man's.
 - We must commit ourselves to it. As the farmer trusts his seeds and the patients trusts their doctors, the passengers trust their pilot, so we must trust God's Word.
- Salvation is hearing God's Word, accepting it as God's truth, and giving ourselves to it.

THIS IS GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION AND TO HIS HEAVEN!